

SILVER, Best Consumer Experience

Campaign Title: Piccadilly Lights

Year the campaign took place: 2018-2019



Brand: Twitter

Creative Agency: Zeroatt

Media Company/Agency: Ocean Outdoor

Research Company: Firefish USA, Spinview Global

Summary of the marketing challenge, methodology, insight discovered, creative execution and business impact.

In 2018, Twitter launched a reactive out-of-home campaign at Piccadilly Lights, showcasing the biggest cultural moments in the country and their associated conversation on the platform. To put our best creative forward, we challenged the notion that pre-testing OOH was impossible and developed a bespoke Virtual Reality solution, placing consumers in a simulated 360° environment to gather contextual feedback. We discovered that the virtual experience was the key to uncovering 'real' actionable insight - going beyond what traditional testing could surface - and unlocking the ability to achieve

next-level effectiveness in our OOH campaigns.

CONSUMER INSIGHT

Virtual reality creates a physical memory in consumers, transforming creative testing into a natural experience that uncovers “real” insight.

MARKETING CHALLENGE

Twitter's ubiquity presents a unique marketing challenge; While our near universal brand awareness keeps us top of mind in the moments that matter, an always-on brand buzz makes it tough for us to own our message and optimize brand marketing for the greatest impact. Every campaign we launch needs to cut through the noise in unique and bold ways and connect to people at a human level to represent the brand in the most compelling way possible.

Beyond the message breakthrough challenge, there is also a media mix challenge. While online advertising puts our end consumer one click away from our platform, it's a noisy space. Twitter serves the public conversation and that means aligning our marketing to where people notice it - in the real world, in moments that matter, with messages that reinforce our brand purpose. We lean on experiential and out-of-home, in iconic locations such as Times Square and Piccadilly Lights, to broadcast our brand message in a unique way so it is heard and noticed - even though the medium is traditionally less optimizable.

The UK Piccadilly Lights marketing campaign was an exciting canvas to show the world the value of Twitter - but it was one of the most complex advertising placements to navigate. The Piccadilly Lights digital screen is an iconic landmark in London, in the heart of commerce, tourism, and culture - which means lots of eyeballs, but also lots of simultaneous messages and signals for the consumer. The screen itself is curved and shows six brands simultaneously, while moving them around the screen. It's akin to watching many TV screens at once, each brand's ever-changing content fighting for your attention. We knew we could not simply run content

that has worked elsewhere in digital or even other out-of-home, and had to study this particular location and optimize our assets for maximum breakthrough and persuasion. There had to be a better way than traditional creative research - so we decided to create a way.

METHODOLOGY

Unlike tried and true creative testing and research methodology, there was no manual for how to optimally conduct a Virtual Reality creative evaluation - we had to create our own. Traditional research principles still needed to apply - minimizing bias, ensuring randomization, expert moderation techniques. But VR technology introduced an additional set of variables - possible eye fatigue, image settings, physical headset fit, and even the age-old dilemma of dying batteries. Nevertheless, Twitter, through the partnership of the VR technology company Spinview and research agency Firefish, worked to develop a methodology from scratch within weeks.

Two different creative concepts were incorporated into a 360° video of Piccadilly Circus. The intersection around the digital screen was filmed in 360° and a two-minute video loop was rendered onto the screen. We mocked up Twitter test concepts along with other brand advertisements known to play on that screen, simulating how the campaign would look in real context. The video also had real sights and sounds of being a pedestrian at Piccadilly, making it feel like the consumer was actually there. There were buses driving by blocking views, street noise, other pedestrians walking by, and most importantly, other advertising messages both on and off the screen.

Deep-dive focus groups were run in the UK, where respondents viewed the scene through headsets, taking in the natural environment of the ad. To vet the VR approach, we split the qualitative sessions into VR and non-VR (traditional quals) in a sort of research "A/B" test. Respondents were introduced to the stimuli - in VR (or via TV screens in the traditional groups) - and a two hour session uncovered insights across things like emotional connection to the location, the experience with the brand, as well as creative concept reactions. The VR sessions were infinitely more animated and rich with feedback - the respondents felt as if they were transported to the site itself,

and had so much more to say about the execution. The cross-functional team in attendance immediately had several "light bulb" moments, and ultimately the insights from these sessions transformed the creative in unforeseen ways.

CREATIVE EXECUTION

The creative was complex but the VR experience made the stimuli delivery easy to digest and enabled robust feedback. Testing the creative presented a layer of complexity, because we were testing 'how' it was being presented rather than 'what' was being presented. Twitter is real-time, so we couldn't possibly pre-determine the creative that would run for 12 weeks - it would be developed and curated every day but presented in a consistent way. Vetting the creative look and feel via VR helped ensure the creative stood out in the midst of the multitude of messages the consumer is bombarded with in that location - no matter the topic that day.

What we thought was bold and striking initially ended up being not so in context, and the Twitter bird got an upgrade in prominence. Initially the Twitter creative assets were designed for bold impact with key art imagery. While it looked stunning on a computer screen inside the four walls of a Twitter office, add in 5 other brands, 5,000 people, and 50,000 sights, sounds, and messages of Piccadilly, and the creative simply lost impact and didn't call back to the brand. Having the research respondents transported to Piccadilly for a simulated visual and auditory experience provided direction to improve the creative in several ways - including scrapping still imagery, in favor of dynamic video, as well as dialing up the Twitter bird brand cues so that we stood out. Major changes to the call to action wording - differing based on the cultural moment highlighted - and tweaking the ways in which information was presented on the screen helped drive additional clarity, relevance, and ensured a smoother flow. All in all, these refinements would have never been uncovered nor implemented, had we not pre-tested in context.

Over the span of 12 weeks, Piccadilly Lights featured topics that included events, big TV moments, cultural topics, sports, and news.

The House of Cards final season, Diwali festival, Women in Football (Soccer), movie releases, and the holidays were all examples of topics highlighted,

illustrating the vibrant and diverse conversations taking place on Twitter in the UK.

BUSINESS RESULTS/LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, the campaign had set out to represent Twitter as a place to connect to a diverse span of public conversations that plug into UK culture. It achieved that, and more, through the effective and innovative collaboration between research, technology, creative, and marketing teams.

Twitter's Piccadilly Lights campaign was seen by over half a million people a day over a span of 12 weeks in late 2018 through early 2019. It was not only seen by passersby in Piccadilly Circus, but was covered across dozens of local and national press outlets, celebrity Twitter mentions, and delighted Twitter's UK brand advertisers, who brought it up unsolicited in most sales meetings. The ripple effect of the execution + coverage was reflected in positive brand uplift among the UK population as measured via market-level brand tracking - including a statistically significant lift in Twitter ad awareness, and increased associations with the key brand messages of the campaign - that Twitter allows you to plug into unique perspectives from those close to key moments happening in the world.

Beyond the brand impact, the ability to use VR to simulate outdoor and experiential creative ahead of launch has upleveled the collaboration opportunity between research and creative teams. We can now do research the way the creative was intended to be seen - helping build partnership between agencies, marketers, and researchers to ensure that both art and science play a role in improving our campaigns. This bespoke VR methodology has and will continue to help Twitter put our best foot forward across outdoor and experiential executions globally.